

of nature, on his troubled soul, and experienced sensations of pleasure and happiness beyond the power of words to express—with a heart beating in unison with one of our poets, when he says,—

"O, nature, how thy charms beguile,  
And sooth the cares to sleep,  
Thou seemest to smile with those who smile,  
And weep with those who weep."

Again, does not the scenery amid which we are educated, have much to do in moulding character? "I hold," says one of our modern writers, "that the qualities of the mind of any particular individual will be found, as a general rule, indicative of character of the external scenery as well as the moral influences which have surrounded him. External calls forth the internal, because they constitute the food of the mind; and as the nourishment, so is the strength and vigor imparted."

Who does not feel stronger, happier and better, in performing the duties devolved upon him, when surrounded by the immaculate loveliness of nature? But the natural scenery of our beautiful earth is not all which I would invite your attention and deepest admiration. It alone does not constitute nature. Though truly, nature has been so perverted by man that it is impossible for him to designate each of its constituents. As I have previously hinted, man's inventive faculties held such an ascendancy over his moral and reasoning powers that, at one time, he employed these ruling propensities in constructing and introducing fashions for the adoption of the entire race of his fellow-beings, that were as vitiating as unnatural. And, indeed at one period, did man carry his ingenuity so far as to conceive the idea of outdoing nature in the external moulding of that beautiful structure—the human form. To that complicated piece of mechanism, did he apply his art with all the bold rudeness of conceited ignorance. He seems to imagine that the physical forms of the weaker portion of mankind would the better correspond with their weakness if sufficiently contracted to resemble the slight figure of a certain disagreeable, ill-natured insect, that secures the tolerance of its presence only through fear of its sting. But, thank heaven, man's better nature is now gaining the ascendancy. He is now penitently endeavoring to make due separation for his former transgressions, and justly acknowledges the supremacy of nature.

Meyersdale, Pa.

HUGH MILLER said: "Prayer is so mighty an instrument that no one ever thoroughly mastered all its keys. They sweep along the infinite scale of man's wants and of God's goodness."

## HAPPINESS.

J. A. RIDENOUR.

All men want to be happy and all seek happiness, but many seek in the wrong channels for it; they find what they *call* happiness, but it is only a poor, miserable counterfeit. The true, enduring, and genuine article they have not known.

True, genuine happiness is the real joy and sunshine of life. Its primary definition as given by Webster is: "An agreeable feeling or condition of the soul arising from good of any kind; the possession of those circumstances or that state of being which is attended with enjoyment, felicity, blessedness, bliss, and joyful satisfaction."

Real happiness, is something of which we can not be robbed. It is that blessed condition of joy and peace that the world can neither give nor take away. Many earthly conditions are consistent with it, and may be made subservient to it; but it is not wholly dependent upon any of them.

Great possessions of wealth, which may be a blessing to the possessor, can not of themselves constitute true happiness; for, "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things he possesseth." Contentment with present acquirements and attainments, (if there is such a condition with worldly men) can not bring or *is not* true happiness; but "Godliness *with contentment*, is great gain" for that alone is the source of true happiness.

Worldly greatness, riches, power, position, wisdom or exultation, unsanctified by Divine grace, may give temporary joy; but can not bring true and lasting happiness. Constituted as we are by nature, subject to the influence of the changing conditions of life, "We are of all men the most miserable" if we have no hope beyond this life, for without hope the heart dieth. The expectation of *future* good is what gives real happiness.

If all our present consolation is founded upon earthly friends, possessions, fame and influence, can we be happy when reverses come, our possessions take wings and fly away, our friends forsake us, our enemies destroy our reputation, our influence gone, and our health declining? No, we must have our hope anchored to Christ within the vale, "Where he now appears in the presence of God for us." Then like Job, who under similar trying circumstances said: "Shall I receive good at the hand of the Lord and not receive evil? The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord. And though he slay me, yet will I trust him."

Would Job have been happy when his reverses came, if he had not been a pious

servant of the Lord? King Solomon's experience was a varied one, and he possessed natural advantages to a greater extent than most men, he sought happiness through every channel accessible to man, and after gratifying every desire to its fullest extent, he gives us the benefit of his experience and says, so far as wealth, power, fame, and self-gratification are concerned: "That all is vanity and vexation of spirit."

No real happiness in all this, but said he: "Hear the conclusion of the whole matter, to fear God and keep his commandments is the whole duty of man." And a greater than Solomon—Jesus the Son of God—said: "If ye know these things, *happy* are ye if ye do them."

Duty and happiness are inseparable. True happiness consists in being right with God, and doing right to man. No one can have a conscience void of offence toward God and man without being happy, and no one can be happy under the goading of a guilty conscience. A clear and approving conscience is absolutely essential to true and real happiness.

The consciousness of being in the line of duty, doing the best we can, and the Spirit of God, bearing witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God, are the only conditions under which we may be truly happy under any and every condition of life.

This was not long since illustrated by the parents of a little child, their only child sleeping in death. As the sorrow stricken parents were taking their last view of the little form in the casket, the father, an infidel, took the little hand of the child in his and said, his heart almost breaking with grief: "This is the last time I shall ever be permitted to see my child." But the mother, a devout Christian, took that cold hand in hers and said in the happy enjoyment of a hope through Jesus given: "I expect to meet my darling, and clasp this little hand again in the kingdom of glory."

It is not difficult to decide which of these parents, in this dark, dark hour of trial, enjoyed true and substantial happiness. We want that true happiness that will comfort in adversity as well as prosperity.

Elkhart, Ind.

It is the neglect and abuse of Christianity by those who profess it, more than any real outside opposition to it, that hinders its progress, and prevents its speedy and complete triumph in the world.—*Rev. Wm. S. Balch.*

CHRIST's yoke is easy, when well adjusted to the neck.